



17555 PEAK AVENUE MORGAN HILL CALIFORNIA 95037  
(408) 782-0008

**SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 7, 2005**

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**Morgan Hill Civic Center**  
Council Chambers  
17555 Peak Avenue

**Senior Advisory Committee**

Chair	William Keig
Vice-Chair	Kenneth Mort
Committee Member	Susan Fent
Committee Member	Sharon Leonard
Committee Member	Jeannette Riley
Committee Member	Gloria Subocz
Committee Member	Vacant

Parks & Recreation Commission Liaison	Laura Hagiperos
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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Keig called the special meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**DECLARATION OF POSTING THE AGENDA**

Per Government Code 54954.2

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **BUSINESS**

### **1. Introduction of Assemblyman John Laird by Senior Advisory Committee Chairman, William Keig.**

Introductions were made by all those in attendance: Assemblyman John Laird, Mayor Dennis Kennedy, Senior Assembly Member Elissa Young, YMCA Senior Center Director Patricia Wyman, Resident and Para-Transit client Ms. Santa Monaco, CEO of Outreach Dr. Kathryn Heatley, Occupational Therapist with Silicon Valley Independent Living Center Terry Appelgate, VTA Acting Accessibility Services Manager Edna Pampy, Senior Advisory Committee Chair Keig, Vice Chair Mort, Members Fent, Leonard, Riley, and Subocz, and Staff Karen Lengsfeld.

### **2. Overview of VTA paratransit issues as they relate to South County Seniors by Senior Advisory Committee Member and Council on Aging Advisory Commission Representative, Susan Fent.**

**Information Item:** Ms. Fent to present a brief history and key points of fact on VTA paratransit issues as they relate to seniors.

Ms. Fent presented an overview of the current VTA paratransit application process, the proposed VTA surcharge to South County paratransit riders, and the lack of a voting representative on the VTA Board from South County.

Ms. Fent stated that the VTA brochures are not provided in Spanish, that the applications are not part of the brochure and must be sent for separately, that interviews to determine paratransit eligibility are required, that free transportation to those interviews is not provided, that interviews are only held in Morgan Hill every other month, that recertification is necessary, and that the person determining whether or not an individual is qualified for paratransit is not a trained social worker or a medical professional.

Ms. Fent stated the \$7 one-way surcharge being proposed for South County riders may be cost prohibitive for some to use the paratransit system.

Ms. Fent also stated that the VTA Board representative for South County is from Milpitas and therefore does not truly represent South County ridership.

Ms. Fent requested that Assemblyman Laird help seniors in South County gain access to fair and affordable transportation.

### **3. Elissa Young, Senior Assembly Member**

**Information Item.** Ms. Young will discuss proposed legislation to improve state-wide senior transportation.

Ms. Young reported on President Bush's Executive Order Human Service Transportation Coordination ("United We Ride") and discussed proposed state legislation. Ms. Young stated that careful research be conducted and that proposed legislation be cost effective and support the position of the Mobility Task Force. Ms. Young requested support should legislation come to the floor of the State Assembly that improves transportation for seniors.

Included in these minutes is (1) a hand-out provided by Ms. Young from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Public Affairs, dated November 18, 2004 entitled "45 States Receive Federal Grants to Coordinate Transportation Services," (2) a description of the "United We Ride Mobility Summit" planned for March 7 by Peter Steinert, Caltrans Division of Mass Transportation, and (3) a letter from Ms. Young entitled, "Funding for Continued Mobility for the Elderly Population."

4. **John Laird, California State Assembly Member**  
**Information Item.** Assembly Member Laird will discuss VTA paratransit issues.

John Laird announced that he was recently appointed as Chair of the State Budget Committee. Mr. Laird announced that he has proposed AB3011, sponsored by the Santa Clara County Valley Transit Authority, which would allow the Authority to assess an additional \$4 on vehicles registered in Santa Clara County to help transportation and traffic congestion relief projects.

Patricia Wyman, Director of the Senior Center, expressed her opinion that the VTA should not spend money on a color brochure, that paratransit application materials be more accessible and provided in multiple languages, that an eligibility interview not be required and that a letter from an applicant's doctor should suffice, that an interpreter be present at the eligibility interview if requested, and that the individuals who conduct the interview be qualified to make eligibility decisions.

Santa Monaco, a 94 year old resident, spoke about her VTA paratransit recertification experience. Ms. Monaco stated that she was required to provide her own transportation to the interview, was not allowed to have her daughter present, and was subjected to a strenuous test of her physical abilities in the heat.

Terry Appelgate, Occupational Therapist with the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, stated that there was a 5 year, \$3 million contract with Orthopedic Hospital to provide the eligibility interviews. Ms. Appelgate also said that she believes that the VTA board structure needs to be changed to include a change in how VTA officials are selected. Attached is a handout describing recommendations of the transportation coalition that focuses on the needs of seniors and disabled.

Kathryn Heatley, CEO of Outreach, commented that the paratransit eligibility process needs radical improvement. She stated that South County is a unique area where a broader approach to transportation issues should be taken. Ms. Heatley commented that VTA may not be the answer for all South County riders and that the transportation needs of elderly who are not paratransit eligible should be considered.

Edna Pampy, Acting Accessibility Services Manager for VTA, announced that three public hearing meetings have been scheduled for January 20, 24, and 25 to discuss proposed changes to the paratransit eligibility certification process. The proposed major changes include receiving an application immediately upon request instead of mailing in the postcard to request an application, a one-page personal data sheet instead of a multi-page application form, eliminating the physician verification of disability for many applicants, and providing free transportation to the interview. Ms. Pampy also stated that a regional transit discount program is available and that paratransit riders get free rides on fixed routes and light rails. She also stated that interviews will be held in South County

more frequently when requested by an applicant. Ms. Pampy said that VTA is hopeful that the new process will be more streamlined for the customer.

Mayor Kennedy asked Ms. Pampy why the interview portion of the application process is not eliminated. Ms. Pampy explained that the interview is necessary to determine functional ability; not to determine whether or not there was a disability.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT** to the next monthly meeting scheduled on **February 1, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall, 17555 Peak Avenue, Morgan Hill.**